

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMECBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBAFQY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0616

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DON MCHENRY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: COMMENTS BY FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA'S
ASSISTANT

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA'S ASSISTANT, NEIL VAN HEERDEN,
MARCH 29, UNDERScoreD TO EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR, THE
POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE SAG DECISION ON NAMIBIA OF
PRESENT CARTER'S FORTHCOMING SPEECH IN LAGOS ON APRIL 1.
VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS HAVING
INCREASED DIFFICULTY WITH THE "HAWKS" IN THE LEADERSHIP
FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF CLEMENS KAPUUNO. THE HARD-
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LINERS, VAN HEERDEN SAID, ARE NOW ASSERTING THAT IF
SOUTH AFIRCA HAD MOVED AHEAD INDEPENDENTLY IN NAMIBIA,
KAPUUNO'S ASSASSINATION WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE.
VAN HEERDEN SAID THAERE WOULD NOT BE A CABINET MEETING
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS
TOMORROW, MARCH 30, AS FOURIE HAD INDICATED (CAPE TOWN
0603) BECAUSE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD DECIDED TO CANCEL

THE PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS IN ORDER TO HAVE THE CABINET SESSION THIS MORNING, MARCH 29, TO DISCUSS THE KAPUWO INCIDENT. ALTHOUGH THE CABINET WAS STILL IN SESSION AT THE TIME OF THE CONVERSATION, VAN HEERDEN DID NOT THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY PRECIPITOUS DECISION OR ACTION BY SOUTH AFRICA AFFECTING THE PROPOSAL. "THE LINE WE ARE STRESSING," HE SAID, "IS THAT SWAPO'S MOTIVATION IN THE ASSASSINATION COULD WELL HAVE BEEN TO PROVOKE SOUTH AFRICA INTO SOME ACTION WHICH WOULD SEEM TO PREJUDICE THE OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS." CONSEQUENTLY, VAN HEERDEN SAID, HE EXPECTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST SEVERAL DAYS TO MAKE ITS DECISION, IF, DURING THE COURSE OF THIS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, HE ASSERTED, PRESIDENT CARTER SHOULD MAKE "EXTREME" STATEMENTS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA IN LAGOS, THIS COULD SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S TASK. HE HOPED THIS MESSAGE COULD BE GOTTEN THROUGH TO DON MCHENRY.

2. VAN HEERDEN ALSO UNDERLINED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM CREATED BY THE ASSASSINATION OF KAPUWO, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS "IRREPLACEABLE" IN THE DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE ALLIANCE. THERE IS GREAT CONCERN, HE SAID, THAT SWAPO INTENDS TO PICK OFF THE PROMINENT DTA LEADERS LIKE DIRK MUDGE AND BEN AFRICA, AND THUS DEMORALIZE AND VIRTUALLY DESTROY THE CHANCES OF THE TURNHALLE GROUP IN A FUTURE ELECTION. THERE WAS WIDE CONFIDENTIAL

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AGREEMENT, HE SAID, THAT THIS SITUATION COULD NOT GO ON. SECURITY OFFICIALS, HE SAID, SAY THAT THEY CAN CONTROL THE SITUATION 95 PERCENT IF GIVEN AUTHORITY TO DO SO.

3. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT OF COURSE THERE IS NO FIRM EVIDENCE AT THE MOMENT THAT SWAPO WAS IN FACT RESPONSIBLE, BUT QUITE CLEARLY IT IS THE PRIME SUSPECT. HE SAID "CONFIDENTIALLY," THAT THERE WAS SOME TENTATIVE EVIDENCE LINKING INTERNAL SWAPO VICE TREASURER TAUNO HATUIKULIPI WITH THE INCIDENT. VAN HEERDEN ASKED IF FURTHER INFORMATION WAS DEVELOPED ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INFORM THE CONTACT GROUP. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR REPLIED THAT IF THE SAG WISHED TO ALERT THE CONTACT GROUP TO ANY SUCH INFORMATION THAT WAS A MATTER FOR IT TO DECIDE, BUT THE CONTACT GROUP WOULD OF COURSE NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPT THE CONCLUSIONS THE SAG DREW FROM IT AND WOULD IN ANY EVENT URGE RESTRAINT ON THE SAG IN REACTING TO IT. VAN HEERDEN RESPONDED THAT RESTRAINT COULD ONLY BE MAINTAINED FOR SO LONG UNDER SUCH PROVOCATION.

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